As UN climate open in Doha open, NGOs call for action, ambition and equity

Press release
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[Doha – Qatar] – November 26, 2012 – At the opening of the biggest climate talks of the year, international experts from NGOs organized in the Climate Action Network (CAN) said the Doha negotiations presented a turning point for world with much that needed to be achieved for COP18 to be branded a success.

CAN called for countries to make Doha about action, ambition and equity. Specifically, called not only for developed countries to sign on to second commitment period of the world’s only legally binding climate treaty, the Kyoto Protocol, but for the nations involved to increase their emission reductions within the treaty and to close the loopholes that existed within it which would let 30 billion tonnes of carbon escape into the atmosphere.

Developed countries also needed to increase their emissions reductions commitments as current pledges were so far inadequate to keep the temperature rise below 2 degrees as well as to lock in finance to support mitigation action by developing nations.

Tasneem Essop, International Climate Policy Advocate for WWF, said the inadequate performance by developed countries was eroding trust which would have implications for the negotiations.

“While developing countries can take on more action, they can only do so if developed countries meet their commitments to provide finance,” she said.

Martin Kaiser, head of the Greenpeace delegation, said the way countries approached the Kyoto Protocol would set the tone for the talks.

“EU leaders need to reject pressure from the coal and oil industry, and strengthen its legal limitation of atmospheric pollution without loopholes,” he said. “This send out a challenge to US President Barrack Obama and other world leaders to restart their international engagement in the interests of their citizens and millions people around the globe.”

“We call on Europe to step up at this conference, and criticise Japan and Canada for refusing to sign up to Kyoto’s second commitment period,” he said.

Wael Hmaidan, Director of CAN International, said the Doha talks were about what kind of world we want to live in.
With warming at just 0.8 degrees, devastating consequences of climate change have already hit many countries this year, including Hurricane Sandy in the Americas and droughts in the US and Russia.

“The door to staying below the internationally agreed 2 degrees temperature rise is still open, but we need developed countries to increase their commitment to reducing carbon emissions more quickly so that this door does not slam shut,” Mr Hmaidan said.

If the talks do not produce a work program that is concrete and meaningful, then the talks' ability to produce a fair and legally binding agreement to deal with climate change after 2020 will be impacted.

“The Qatar COP presidency – the first for the Middle East - needs to build trust by making an emissions reduction pledge, or risk losing political momentum in the talks,” Mr Hmaidan said,

But recent political developments would be positive for the talks. The reelection of President Obama should allow more concrete action from the United States, according to Alden Meyer, Director of Strategy and Policy, Union of Concerned Scientists.

“We need the US to hit the reset button on their existing negotiating positions and to make a real commitment to keeping temperatures below 2 degrees,” Mr Meyer said.

"Specifically, the US negotiators should be more forthcoming in Doha on just how the US will meet its pledge to reduce its emissions by 17 percent below 2005 levels by 2020, as well as how it will achieve the near-total decarbonization of the US economy needed by mid-century to meet the 2 degree goal."

Archived video footage from the press conference can be found at: http://unfccc4.meta-fusion.com/kongresse/cop18/templ/ovw_onDemand.php?id_kongressmain=231

More information on CAN-International's asks for Doha can be found at: http://climatenetwork.org/publication/doha-milestones-and-action

Contacts
Climate Action Network (CAN) is a global network of over 700 NGOs working to promote government and individual action to limit human-induced climate change to ecologically sustainable levels.

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